

# Colonel House in Paris: The Fate of a Presidential Adviser

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Edward Mandell House was for many years a close friend and adviser of Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States 1913-21. Being a presidential adviser is not an easy job. House, nevertheless, managed to stay on for nearly two full terms. But in 1918 he was appointed an official delegate to the Paris Peace Conference (Wilson himself headed the American Delegation, the other representatives being Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker H. Bliss and Ambassador Henry White) and during that Conference a 'break' occurred between the two men. Since then an unending debate has been going on in American historiography as to why and when this break actually took place. In 1973 I published yet another attempt to solve the problem,<sup>1</sup> and the editor of this journal has kindly asked me to give a summary of my book as an example of the study of American history in Scandinavia. On the following pages I shall therefore give a historiographical survey followed by a brief statement of my own findings.

The reason why the question has attracted so many scholars is not only that it presents a fascinating psychological problem but also that in the greater perspective the explanation one gives of the break has a bearing on the evaluation of the President and his policy at the Peace Conference.<sup>2</sup> Many interpretations of the break have been presented, shifting the 'guilt' alternatively between House and Wilson, and seeking the causes either in principles and politics or in personalities and psychology, or in a combination of both.

Also the actual dating of the break has been under discussion: Did it occur immediately after Wilson's return to Paris (after a brief sojourn in the US) in March 1919? or was it the result of a gradual development? and if so, when did this process start and end? Which again raises another set of questions: Did House actually exert any influence on the policy of the American President

during the critical phase of the Conference? Who was responsible for the series of compromises Wilson had to make in order to obtain what he thought was the core of his program, the League of Nations?

The literature on the subject can be roughly classified into three main themes on the reasons for the break:

The first version, which can also be called the 'contemporary' or 'official' version, was presented by, inter alios, Cary Grayson, Wilson's personal physician and friend, and publicly recorded by Wilson's biographer, Ray Stannard Baker, in his three-volume work on the Conference: *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* (1923).<sup>3</sup> According to this interpretation, which incidentally —although on quite different premises—received the support of Henry Wickham Steed,<sup>4</sup> editor of *The Times* and definitely not a member of the clique about Wilson, the reasons for the break are primarily to be sought in House's conduct during the President's absence from the Conference in February—March 1919, and the break itself is given as having occurred in the period immediately after Wilson's return to Paris in the middle of March. Especially House's policy on the problems relating to the Preliminary Peace Treaty and the League of Nations is advanced as decisive, together with his conciliatory attitude to the French demands for a Rhenish Republic.

This theory was strongly refuted by House's official biographer, Charles Seymour, in his edition of House's diary and letters: *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, the fourth volume of which was published in 1928.<sup>5</sup> Using excerpts from the then still unpublished minutes of meetings of the Council of Ten, Seymour repudiated the charge that House had acted illoyally to the President in February—March 1919. At the same time, however, he admitted that House had been more willing to compromise with the Allied Powers than even Wilson himself appears to have been. This was, in fact, a not unimportant admission on the part of Seymour, because another of Baker's lines of argument was that House, by his enthusiasm for compromise both during Wilson's absence and after his return, had contributed considerably towards undermining the position of the President.

Whereas Baker viewed the Peace Conference from the angle 'Old' versus 'New Diplomacy,' 'a conflict between the evils of the old European diplomatic system and the virtues of the new world idealism,' Seymour regarded this as a gross over-simplification: 'Such a picture is attractive to those who will not try to understand

the complexities of historical truth. In reality the Peace Conference was not nearly so simple. It was not so much a duel as a general mêlée, in which the representatives of each nation struggled to secure endorsement for their particular methods of ensuring: the peace.<sup>6</sup> The methods may have differed, but their aim had been the same and, according to Seymour, the American programme too, had been 'coloured by self-interest.' 'Our interest lay entirely in assuring a regime of world tranquillity; our geographical position was such that we could advocate disarmament and arbitration with complete safety. Wilson's idealism was in line with a healthy Real-politik.'

Seymour may have hoped in this way to lead the debate into new paths;<sup>7</sup> if so, he had cause for both satisfaction and disappointment. The former, because late research did in fact accept his refutation of Baker's thesis that the February—March period had been decisive for the break, and the latter, because the next large American work on the Peace Conference again made House not only the principal, but also the scapegoat.

Paul Birdsall's *Versailles Twenty Years After*<sup>8</sup> (1941) was a contemporary attack on a generation of disillusioned Liberals and 'realistic' 'appeasement'-politicians. The book constituted a defense of Wilson's firm attitude and an attack on all who had been willing to compromise, i.e., first and foremost, House. According to Birdsall, House was blameworthy not only for his eagerness to compromise, which had undermined Wilson's negotiating position in a number of critical situations, but also for his internal manipulations, which had split and thus weakened the American Delegation. The decisive phase as regards the break had, however, now shifted. No longer was it the events during Wilson's absence that were regarded as decisive, but House's conduct during the Italian crisis, by which Birdsall considered that he had both split the Delegation and undermined Wilson's policy. Even though Birdsall tried to avoid personal accusations and to keep the discussion on a theoretical plane, House could not help but appear as the scapegoat par excellence, especially as Birdsall's presentation, particularly of the Italian crisis, lacked all proportion.

Seymour, too, advanced a theory on the break between the two men: It was not a question of an event that could be clearly fixed in time, but of a gradual development. This point of view was later supported by Thomas A. Bailey<sup>9</sup> and can now be regarded as generally accepted. At the same time, the research on the question

has partly taken new roads, although a psychological, or psychological, approach to the study of Colonel House's career can hardly be called new—on the contrary, it was the angle taken quite automatically by a number of contemporary 'eye-witnesses.'<sup>10</sup> All the same, the latest contribution within this genre must be characterized as epoch-making. Alexander and Juliette L. George's *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House. A Personality Study*, (1956) is not just the result of close cooperation between a political scientist and a psychologist, but also the first attempt at a consistent utilization of House's voluminous diary in its full, chronological scope.<sup>11</sup> However, before turning to a detailed analysis of this latest, exhaustive contribution to the discussion, it might be wise to study in a little more detail the debate on House in general.

Seymour's edition of House's papers provides a comprehensive view of House and his work; a view which later research has disputed on a number of points, but which did not meet really serious opposition until the publication by George and George of their thorough analysis of House's diary. And in my opinion, even these authors have not taken the matter to its logical conclusion because they have still accepted Seymour's evaluation of House in certain respects. The first volume of Seymour's book included a preface by House himself, in which he stated that the book was in no way a conventional apology. However, Seymour, in his subsequent preface, accepted full scholarly responsibility for the edition and at the same time thanked House for his invaluable comments and advice, adding, moreover, that '[w]hatever deletions appear in the published papers have been dictated by the exigencies of space or by a regard to the feelings of persons still alive, and in no case do they alter the historical meaning of the papers.' In another context, Seymour expressed his own view of House as follows: '... Counsellor and Idealist, Wise, Courageous, Unselfish.'<sup>12</sup>

As source material, the book is very poor. Even its form, 'arranged as a narrative,' makes it difficult—and sometimes even impossible—to discover when Seymour's comments are his own views, when they are paraphrasing omitted parts of the diary, and when they are just summarizing the subsequent text. Another serious defect is the fact that, for stylistic reasons, Seymour frequently omits the date from citations. However, the main point of controversy is the actual selection, or rather, the omissions. The question is whether the selection provided is really representative, and the answer is both a yes and a no. The selection is representative in so

far as it illustrates the most important aspects of Wilsonian policy and House's part in this. But even contemporary commentators pointed to a tendency to over-estimate House's role here,<sup>13</sup> and in the light of more recent research it must be emphasized that the picture of House as the ever loyal and unselfish adviser drawn by Seymour has, to say the least, been given a number of new facets. There were certain aspects of House's activities that Seymour simply omitted or glossed over, aspects that he did not, or would not, see. And what is more, there is a definite trend in the omissions, the question that Seymour consistently avoided was the fundamental one: the problem of House's loyalty.

One of the points on which Seymour's book is not exhaustive concerns the conversations between House and the German Ambassador, Count Bernstorff in a number of critical situations during the period of neutrality. In 1958, Karl E. Birnbaum, working on the basis of a telegram from Bernstorff to *Auswärtiges Amt* of 21 November, 1916, proved, or at any rate showed it to be highly likely, that House had not at this time interpreted with complete loyalty Wilson's ideas for a peace-move, ideas to which House himself had been opposed.<sup>14</sup> Birnbaum's demonstration of illoyal behavior on the part of House is only one of many produced by later historians. It is stressed here, however, because it prompted a reply, although only an indirect one, by Seymour. In the memorial volume for G. P. Gooch in 1961, he wrote an article on 'The House-Bernstorff Conversations in Perspective,' which can hardly have been inspired by anyone but Birnbaum.<sup>15</sup> What is characteristic about the article is, however, the fact that Seymour did not take up the question of House's loyalty at all, but simply wrote roughly the same as he had always written, and with the same source references. There were still sides of House that he chose to ignore.

This is not the only time in recent years that Seymour has returned to the question of House. In 1957, on the occasion of the centenary of Wilson's birth, he wrote an article, 'The Role of Colonel House in Wilson's Diplomacy,' for inclusion in the memorial volume, giving in just a few pages a brilliant presentation of his evaluation of House's role in Wilson's foreign policy.<sup>16</sup> Using as a basis the greatly varying degrees of importance attached over the years to House's influence, Seymour presented his own conviction 'that the reaction emphasizing the political importance of House is likely to increase in strength,' but that it would at the

same time become 'discriminatory in character.' It would be shown that House's influence had been greatest 'in policies relating to Western Europe and particularly to the issues raised by the war ... but with certain shadings in emphasis. His service will tend to be interpreted as that of diplomatic tactician and executive agent rather than as a determining or decisive influence in the formation of policy. Wilson's basic principles were by no means inspired by the Colonel. ... He was a political catalyst, an expert on method, a purveyor of facts, a stimulus and a corrective.'<sup>17</sup> 'We was not qualified to originate policy, but he was supremely qualified to facilitate its execution.' He possessed all the traits that characterize 'the finished diplomatist.'<sup>18</sup>

Incidentally, the spheres advanced by Seymour as characteristic of House's influence were identical to those he had stressed 30 years earlier, with a single exception: the negotiations between the United States and the Allies prior to the Armistice with Germany. Seymour still regarded the result as 'a diplomatic victory of distinction,' although he stressed the fact that '... House's success was not as clear-cut as he imagined and it was not effectively capitalized.'<sup>19</sup> He blamed Wilson for the latter, but left the former, and most interesting, comment untouched. This remarkably clearly drawn portrait of House represented an important modification of the far cruder picture painted in *Intimate Papers*; but Seymour stuck to his guns on one point: for him, House was still the diplomat par excellence or, as Harold Nicolson has put it, 'the best diplomatic brain that America has yet produced. ...'<sup>20</sup>

*Intimate Papers* constitutes the only attempt at a comprehensive, political biography of House, but Wilsonian research of recent years has naturally also touched upon his closest adviser. And practically every author has managed to unearth from the House papers etc. details that shake the picture established by Seymour in his *Intimate Papers*. One of the latest analyses of House as a diplomat has been provided by Arthur S. Link in the fourth volume of his biography of Wilson, in connection with his discussion of the so-called House-Grey memorandum, one of the most debated documents of the period of neutrality.<sup>21</sup> Link's evaluation is one of the hardest judgments ever made on House. In his negotiations with the European statesmen in February 1916, House 'grossly misrepresented the President and misinformed him as well'; in other words, he had conducted an independent policy. However, in Link's opinion, not

only had he behaved in an illoyal manner to Wilson, he had also failed as a negotiator:

House had heard what he wanted to hear in Paris and London. He had deluded himself into believing that the British and French wanted American mediation for a negotiated peace. It did not matter that this was not true, or that the British and French leaders had said nothing to indicate that it was either true or possible. House was out of touch with reality by the time of his conversations in Paris and his return to London. He consequently not only misinformed and misled President Wilson but also encouraged him to base fundamental foreign policy on the assumption that American mediation was possible in the immediate future.<sup>22</sup>

There is thus not much left of House the diplomat.

Nevertheless, a number of problems still remain because House possessed, to an unusual degree, the ability of being 'all things to all men.' Just as we think we have grasped the 'essence' of the man, the image crumbles away, only to reappear in a new form, and this is really also the case with Link's portrait. As House appears in the above passages, he must be regarded as a man with an obsession, as the naive amateur in the hands of cynical professionals. However, there are other aspects of House's time in Europe that present him in quite a different light: as the man able to make a cool and realistic analysis of a political situation and draw the relevant conclusions. One example of this has been pointed out by Link himself. House spent three days in Berlin and at once apprehended the entire situation: the fight between the civilian and the military leaders, and the increasingly precarious position of the former, which could be completely upset by too harsh American demands. He explained this situation in lucid detail in a letter to the President, and pointed out the consequences to the political constellation in Germany of a severe American course in the renewed Lusitania-negotiations. And this letter persuaded Wilson to withdraw forthwith the support he had hitherto given to the hard line followed by the Secretary of State, Robert Lansing:

It was as if Wilson had seen a great light. For the first time he understood what Gerard (the American Ambassador in Berlin) had failed to make clear, or even to mention—that severe demands might well tip the balance in Germany against the Chancellor and set engines in fatal motion under the seas.<sup>23</sup>

The objection can be made that Link's approach is very narrow, being too closely tied to the direct statements of his sources, and it is therefore hardly surprising that other authors, who have approached the matter from different angles, have arrived at more fin-

ely shaded evaluations of House's behavior during this same visit to Europe. It is, for example, the wider political perspectives of House's negotiations that have interested Edward H. Buehrig in his book, *Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power*. However, it should be noted that Buehrig used only published material in his assessment of House's peace mission, i.e. primarily Seymour's selection; had he had Link's material at his disposal, he might have arrived at a slightly less favorable conclusion. However, it is in any case quite different sides of the matter that he brings to light than Link. The important thing for Buehrig is not so much the actual events as their significance, and it is thus not really the negotiations themselves but the prelude to them, i.e. the preliminary correspondence between House and Sir Edward Grey, that interests him. In Buehrig's view, a negotiated peace between the contending parties was the solution that best accorded with America's interests:

A bold [American] diplomatic intervention thus held enticing prospects. Yet its execution required the United States to be more than an amiable intermediary. American power would have to be brought into play, incurring the danger of military involvement or, though a lesser evil, loss of prestige . . . Actually, considerably prior to the President's espousal of an interventionist diplomacy, Col. House had grasped its importance. First of all, therefore, we should note those moves initiated by House which were designed to hasten the end of the war. Although failing of their immediate objective, they had consequences of singular importance.<sup>24</sup>

During his first peace mission in 1915, House advanced the idea that 'a second convention' after the actual Peace Conference should discuss amendments to international law. Grey had desired American participation, also in the Conference itself, and was therefore not satisfied, but he used this as a premise for an argumentation that continued in the subsequent correspondence and, during the summer and autumn, led House and Wilson a long way along the road to collective security and the League of Nations. House's plans thus achieved a far wider perspective than he himself had at first envisaged. It was thanks to House's peace plans that the idea of a League of Nations made its entry in the diplomacy of the war years, even though it perhaps assumed a different guise than Grey had originally envisaged. The picture Buehrig draws of the negotiations themselves is also extremely favorable, but then, of course, it is only based on Seymour, and like Seymour, Buehrig takes House seriously, attempts to assess his extremely difficult negotiating position and, on this basis, is astonished that anything came out of it at all—and there perhaps he is right.



Ernest R. May, in *The World War and American Isolation 1914—1917*, has also paid particular attention to the House-Grey memorandum, giving his chapter on the subject the very telling title, 'Wilson's Threats of Mediation.' May has used the House diary and the House-Wilson correspondence, but unlike Link, he has concentrated not on whether House interpreted Wilson correctly on this or that occasion, but rather, on the situation itself. Whereas, to Link, it looked as though House had lost all touch with reality, May has a different conception of the situation: As soon as House came to England, he realized, through his talks with British politicians that 'the likelihood of Britain's moderating her economic war had become remote, and future friction was almost certain. The Colonel, who had felt theretofore that his plan might be developed slowly, changed his mind. He began to think it urgent that an agreement be reached whereby Wilson could safely demand peace.'<sup>25</sup> And it was this feeling of urgency that thereafter determined House's actions.

However, there can be no doubt that Link has made a very vital point in his clear establishment of House's complete over-estimation of the importance of the House-Grey memorandum. His assessment of House is fully supported by one of the latest and most independent contributions to the discussion: Victor S. Mamatey's brief but precise characterization in *The United States and East Central Europe 1914—1918*.<sup>26</sup> Against the portrait given by both Seymour and later, George and George, of a man who worried himself about the smallest detail, a consummate technician, Mamatey sets 'a happy extrovert,' a man bored by detail, who is only interested in the grand design, the general picture; a man who prefers to gather his information from talks rather than from studies and who is therefore always well-informed on the very latest events, but whose information is, on the other hand, often one-sided; in fact, a superficial and intellectually indolent man. To George and George, the break between House and Wilson at the Peace Conference was primarily psychologically conditioned, while Birdsall seems to have considered it mainly as the result of a fundamental difference in the two men's conception of the method—and partly also the aim—of the negotiations. Mamatey, on the other hand, takes a different view:

During the war when issues were of necessity broad and when technical questions could be postponed, House's counsels were generally wise and perspicacious. During the armistice negotiations and the Peace Conference, however, when

questions inevitably became highly complex and technical, he found himself out of his depth and his effectiveness as a negotiator declined. The President then lost confidence in his judgment, and their relations cooled.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, House had simply been inadequate.

We can thus in no way say that the debate on House is at an end, but simply ascertain that the varying assessments have depended not only on the different approaches of the authors to their subject, but also on the nature of the source material at their disposal. What has primarily made House a key figure in the historiography of the Wilson period is the simple fact that we have here not only a man who held a central position in the decision-making processes, but also one who kept an exceedingly voluminous diary. This diary is one of the most important sources of information on the political history of the period, but the question is how far we can permit ourselves to trust its testimony. This is really not a question to which there is a universal answer, but one to which each researcher must find the answer that is compatible with his own ego, his material and his conscience, from one situation to another. This, however, is not a unique state of affairs, but simply the common lot of the historian.

The first to be confronted with the problem was Charles Seymour, publisher of the diary, and he solved it in the simplest way imaginable :

Through Miss Denton [Francis B. Denton, House's secretary] was made possible the diary which forms the heart of the entire collection of papers. Every evening, with rare exceptions and during eight years, Col. House dictated to her his resumé of the day. *Definitely and objectively he related his conversations* with, often the very words of, his political associates, and he was associated with the men who made the history of the decade. The result is a journal of more than two thousand pages, a record drafted at the moment and *with a frankness which suggests that it was not designed for publication*. It was the Colonel's comments on men and events, opinions which he sometimes changed, prophecies which upon occasion were fulfilled, a personal document such as the biographer dreams of and seldom discovers.<sup>28</sup>

Put in another way, Seymour took House at his word, indeed in some places he even went so far that, as he himself admits, he came to see the events with House's eyes, or perhaps we should say, as House wished them to be seen.

In the passage quoted above, the first italicized statement is the most astonishing at first glance, not only because it discloses an exceedingly simple and unsophisticated attitude to the source

material, but also because it follows immediately upon Seymour's explanation of the way in which the diary was written; a process that shows how easily unintentional inaccuracies could have crept in. The 'intimate' character of the diary is, moreover, shown here in quite another light. While Seymour did not consider that the diary was intended for publication, Mamatey takes quite a different view: 'His diary, incidentally, is not an intimate, personal one, as is commonly supposed, but one written for future publication. He frequently addresses himself in it to the future reader. ...'<sup>29</sup> And this view is directly substantiated by House's own statements in the diary. It was, quite simply, written to ensure that posterity received what House considered to be the correct conception of his political importance. However, this was not its only purpose; it also functioned as a kind of safety valve for the frustrations inherent in such a delicate position as that held by House, and it undoubtedly had a salutary psychological function: the pleasure and satisfaction of dwelling upon his own achievements. On the other hand, there is one obvious function that the diary does not seem to have had: it did not apparently serve as an aide-memoire for House when he had to formulate his policy in any given situation. On the contrary, House was very careful to make it clear that when a suitable section of the diary had been written, it was locked away and not taken out again. Thus, as it was not intended as a tool, it does not contain analyses of situations or problems. Nor, incidentally, do House's other papers. That was apparently not the way he worked.<sup>30</sup>

A valuable contribution to the illumination of the problems surrounding the diary has been made by Alexander and Juliette L. George. This work is an attempt at a psychological motivation study of Wilson,<sup>31</sup> and House is discussed primarily because the authors consider that the relationship between the two men illustrates important aspects of Wilson's motives. The method adopted by the authors is that of applying a psychological conceptual apparatus to the course of events already established in the usual historical accounts; the book is 'largely a synthesis of facts assembled by previous writers.'<sup>32</sup> It is thus not as a politico-historical but as a psychological study that the book can claim originality. As regards the House diary, the authors have made an exception in that they have gone straight to the source and have thereby managed, on the basis of hitherto largely unpublished passages, to achieve their greatest 'coup' from an historian's point of view.

House and Wilson met for the first time in November 1911. At that time, Wilson was Governor of New Jersey and was actively engaged in efforts to win the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. House, who was financially independent, had previously acted as adviser to various Texas Governors and had a certain standing in the Democratic party on a national level. He had always consistently refused all official posts, which gave him the reputation of being unselfish and disinterested. However, his pleasure in manipulating people and events was obvious.<sup>33</sup> The first meeting soon led to others, and the casual acquaintanceship gradually developed into a more intimate friendship, and for long periods of time, House was Wilson's only confidante. The credit for elucidating the 'mechanism' of this friendship is due to George and George. They have succeeded in showing that the friendship was, to a high degree, deliberate on House's side and that he cultivated it by 'handling' Wilson in a particular way. House had analysed Wilson's need for security, encouragement and flattery and was willing to fulfil it. On the other hand, however, House's admiration and enthusiasm for the President were genuine enough—at any rate in the beginning.

Nonetheless, it is of decisive importance that George and George have been able to prove by their analysis of the entries in House's diary that these indicated as early as 1913 that House felt a certain irritation over Wilson, an irritation that grew stronger as time went by. This was accentuated after Wilson's wedding in December 1915 and increased in step with the growing tension between House and the new Mrs. Wilson.<sup>34</sup> This irritation on the part of House finds expression in a number of critical comments in the diary, both as regards Wilson himself and as regards his policies, accompanied by accounts of what House *himself* would have done in Wilson's place:

The frustrations of House's position were increased by the advent of the second Mrs. Wilson. Whether and to what extent this added tension accounts for it, the fact is that after the marriage the Colonel had much more to say in criticism of the President in his diary.<sup>35</sup>

The question is whether House's increasing coolness towards the President was purely psychologically conditioned, or whether there were also real differences of a political nature. And, in the latter event, whether they were of a fundamental character—whether there was a consistent line or whether they were just

ordinary disagreements from one case to another. The two authors have not provided a clearcut answer to these questions, simply noting from time to time that there was discord, without analysing its character in detail. However, it is in fact possible to prove that fundamental political differences did develop between the two men during the course of the war, but the break cannot, on the other hand, be attributed to them.

The new ground opened by George and George's analysis is thus their explanation of the deterioration of the friendship and of its frail psychological foundation. And in my opinion, this result is unassailable. However, there may be good reason for discussing the two authors' assessment of House and thus also their use of the diary. The picture drawn of the friendship by George and George has been based on an analysis of the diary and the House-Wilson correspondence, and the obvious discrepancy between House's utterances in these is an important and indisputable link in their line of reasoning. But the authors have been far too influenced by the diary and by Seymour's account. Like Seymour, they take House at his word, and they do not seem anywhere to have considered the motives behind the framing of this grandiose monument, but almost to have accepted Seymour's interpretation,<sup>36</sup> which is, as we have seen, one-sided to say the least of it.

That the authors have neglected these problems is naturally related to the fact that the 'hero' of the book is quite definitely Wilson, and that their interest is psychological. However, it also has something to do with the method of the book, primarily, that the interpretations are made on the basis of established facts, i.e. on an existing selection, the aim of which thus tends to determine the conclusions of the new synthesis. All the same, the decisive point is that the two authors have managed, through their studies of the diary, to raise fundamental doubt as to the representativeness of Seymour's selection. Other authors have, of course, also done this, both before and since, but whereas the doubts previously raised related to interpretations of individual instances, which could admittedly, have been pieced together to indicate a certain trend, George and George have illustrated a ruthlessly consistent omission of anything that might touch upon the question of loyalty. In fact, after this, the Seymour House edition can no longer be used, either as source material or as a biography, because his evaluation of House is based on a selection of material in which we can no longer have any faith. The authors themselves seem to be

unaware of the problems they have raised, or at any rate, they have not taken the obvious consequences of their findings. For them, Seymour is still the main source for their *political* assessment of House, but this means that their House portrait disintegrates, which in turn affects their entire interpretation of the break between House and Wilson.

These weaknesses already make their appearance in the two authors' evaluation of House as a diplomat. An introductory characterization places House among the so-called realists, in line with the views held by a branch of the latest research.<sup>37</sup> The authors themselves cite the works of Edward H. Buehrig and Robert E. Osgood,<sup>38</sup> as well as the Seymour version of House, but it must be remembered that neither Buehrig nor Osgood used anything but published material in their evaluations of House—indeed, Buehrig used mainly Seymour. Later, the authors modify their views somewhat: 'House's own approach to international affairs, unusual in his day and since, was in many respects a synthesis of both realist and idealist views of world policies,'<sup>39</sup> and thereby leave the door open for a discussion of their evaluation of House. George and George are fully aware of this discussion,<sup>40</sup> but they nevertheless assess House's role in the formulation of Wilson's neutrality policy as follows:

It was all the more fortunate, therefore, that his [Wilson's] closest adviser—his alter ego, as he sometimes called him—was thoroughly at ease in the setting of the realist philosophy of international relations. It became Colonel House's task to interpret events from this standpoint and to initiate, and prepare the ground for, some of the most important foreign policy projects which Wilson undertook in response to the European conflict.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps this rather superficial interpretation also derives from the fact that Arthur S. Link, in his *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era*, could only in one instance prove that House had not provided Wilson with a completely loyal account of his negotiations.<sup>42</sup> However, this presents yet another example of the serious weakness in the method applied by the authors: they depend too much on the conclusions of others. What makes this particularly grave is the fact that Link, as seen in the fourth volume of his biography, has since had to revise his views considerably. Consequently, the authors' characterization of House's attempts to mediate must also be regarded as out-of-date:

If House's peace efforts failed, they did so perhaps more by reason of circumstances over which he had no control rather than because of any want of skill on his

part. Indeed, he had displayed a distinguished talent for exploring passionate questions dispassionately and for bringing divergent views to their closest point of approximation. That there remained a gap which no diplomatic legerdemain could bridge is no reflection upon his ability as a negotiator.<sup>43</sup>

The authors' analysis of House as a negotiator is based exclusively on the material furnished by Charles Seymour in the first and second volumes of his House edition. And the picture that appears is hardly surprising; it is a portrait of the eminent tactician and organizer, who carefully acquainted himself with even the slightest details, so that he completely mastered all the circumstances of a negotiation. The man who understood and foresaw every situation, and who analysed his opponent's assumptions and psyche in advance and marshalled his arguments accordingly. In short, the picture that presented itself to Seymour's admiring eye, and the picture House wished to paint of himself. Not until the next chapter and in another context, do the authors provide the following significant supplement to their characterization, on the basis of their own studies of the diary:

There can be no question that at the zenith of his career, House exercised tremendous influence upon the course of diplomatic negotiations. Making the fullest allowance for his actual (and extraordinary) power, however, one suspects that he had the capacity for exaggerating the importance of his own role in international affairs. A master of flattery himself, he seems to have been naively susceptible to the compliments of foreign diplomats, whose expressions of esteem, it seems safe to assume, were not always entirely artless. . . . He recorded in his diary literally hundreds of such expressions of esteem, and it is interesting to note that he had the highest estimate of the abilities of the authors of some of the most glowing ones. Such intoxicating praise made it easy for House to forget that his power derived exclusively from his association with Wilson. House seems to have come to believe that the Allied statesmen sought him out for his own capabilities rather than as a spokesman for another and, in his view, less informed man.<sup>44</sup>

We meet this same confused attitude to House again in the chapter on the break. After reading this, we are left with a number of unanswered questions: What really happened? Who was to blame, House or Wilson? What was the reason, Wilson's jealousy or House's persistence, or perhaps something quite different?

In an earlier chapter, the authors sketch House's state of mind at the end of the war and at the beginning of the Conference, as it appears from the entries in his diary: 'coldly realistic about the President's short-comings'; 'resentful of his own subordinate role in policy-making'; 'thinking that European statesmen sought his

advice for its own sake'; 'prey to gradiose notions of his own importance and capacity to influence the foreign policy of the Allied nations.' 'To state the matter baldly, House considered that he could better negotiate the peace treaty than Wilson. . . . House wanted, for once, to act directly, independently.'<sup>45</sup> The authors might therefore have been expected to base their account of the break on the question of House's loyalty, and, to a certain extent, they do this, introducing their thesis with a repudiation of all accusations (i.e., principally those of Mrs. Wilson and R. S. Baker) against House for disloyalty. Here, the authors do not base their arguments on independent source studies but on the scholarly debate on the subject, and on this foundation, they draw their first conclusions:

Neither of the accusations against House, therefore, appears to be warranted. Both seem to be explanations contrived later for the President's undoubted change of attitude toward House during the second half of the Conference. How, then is Wilson's perceptible, gradual cooling toward House upon his return to Paris to be explained?<sup>46</sup>

I consider that the two authors have hereby precluded themselves from gaining the full benefit of their own analysis, because, as pointed out above, they overlook the fact that the rejection by later researchers of Baker's thesis is based on Seymour's account—precisely the account shown by the investigations of George and George to provide a not very credible picture of House. Therefore, the only thing the authors gain by neglecting the problem of loyalty is that their analysis gets on the wrong track right from the beginning. And it is led further astray because they, at the same time, and apparently without justification, accept the theory of the gradual break. They thereby deconcretize the motives of the two men, placing the whole matter on a psychological plane:

It was an unfortunate combination of circumstances—Wilson's increased sensitivity to House as a possible competitor and House's overpowering desire to 'come into his own—that contributed heavily to the gradual waning of the President's enthusiasm for his closest collaborator. No one incident marks the end of the friendship between Wilson and House. The relationship was never terminated in a clearcut fashion. Rather, Wilson gradually withdrew his affection and gradually ceased to consult House.<sup>47</sup>

However, this approach also alters the dimensions of the entire affair, for if there had really been no conflict of loyalty, the matter would be reduced to simply a question of arrogance and jealousy. House wanted to be in the limelight; he was tired of playing second



fiddle, tired of always just agreeing; and Wilson could therefore no longer find the satisfaction in the friendship that had previously been his—on the contrary, it now increased his anxieties. The assumptions thus fail, the whole thing disintegrates, and House ends up as a scapegoat for Wilson's bad conscience. But where then is the drama that managed to inflame both contemporaries and posterity?

Alexander and Juliette George's dissection of House's diary has shown that a consistent analysis of the diary is a necessary but insufficient basis for an understanding of House's conduct at the Peace Conference. What is also needed is a concurrent and partially independent assessment of the political environment in which House acted. And that is what I have tried to do in my book. I have chosen to study House's conduct in a number of situations leading up to and during the Peace Conference, and these situations have been selected primarily because they tell us something about House. Apart from this, I have, as far as possible, described the situation independently of House. In other words, the method is not really biographical, but an attempt at combining, or, perhaps, rather, compromising between an analysis of American policy at the Peace Conference and an account of House's part in its formulation. Such an analysis of House's activities at the Conference seems to point to the fact that his conduct was of such a character that, regardless of possible psychological motives on Wilson's part, too, a break with the President was practically unavoidable, i.e. the scapegoat theory is superfluous. On the other hand, R. S. Baker's thesis on the causes and 'timing' of the break appears increasingly plausible.

It is clear from the diary that, both personally and politically, House was already in opposition to Wilson at the time of his departure for Europe in October 1918.<sup>48</sup> He was frustrated because his real influence on the President appeared to be waning (partly because of Mrs. Wilson's position),<sup>49</sup> and he at the same time felt himself to stand considerably more to the Left of the political spectrum than Wilson.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, before the commencement of the Conference he had had a number of experiences that were to have a decisive influence on his conduct during the Conference itself. Both in the so-called House Mission in the autumn of 1917 and during the pre-Armistice negotiations in 1918, House had been the chief negotiator on the American side, with very wide powers invested in him. At these two conferences, though perhaps prin-

cipally the former, House had obtained insight into how a big inter-Allied meeting was organized and manipulated, and he had acquired a taste for being the man who made the decisions.<sup>51</sup>

Another important factor relating to these two conferences was that House here came into contact with Clemenceau for the first time, and was undoubtedly highly influenced by this strong personality.<sup>52</sup> This in turn had the effect of leading him to favor the French views on a number of points, whereby at the Peace Conference he came to take steps that neither his position as an American nor his standing as a Liberal could ever warrant. He became disloyal to Wilson and to American policy, partly through his own personal attraction to Clemenceau, partly through the feeling of superiority engendered in him by his earlier conference experience, and partly through the frustration born of his increasingly precarious personal relations with the President. On the other hand, the original difference in political interests between Wilson and himself does not appear to have played a significant part in the course of events. On the contrary, in the situations in which House acted in a definitely illoyal manner, he stood clearly to the Right, not to the Left, of the President.<sup>53</sup>

The pre-Armistice negotiations provided the last opportunity for House to act completely independently, and they reveal quite clearly his obvious weaknesses as a negotiator. He seems totally to have underestimated the political consequences of the negotiations and to have accepted formal rather than real concessions. On the other hand, it is clear that he was acting under double pressure, partly from the Allies in Paris and partly from the President in Washington, and there is no doubt that both during the negotiations themselves and in the subsequent period, House was very uncertain as to the President's intentions. He simply did not know what Wilson wanted.<sup>54</sup>

However, it was not only the President's policy of which House was uncertain in this period, but also his own position. He would obviously be given a formally prominent place in the American Delegation, but the question was how much real influence he would have. Even before the end of the war an internal struggle for power had been played out between House and Lansing on the dominant role in the coming American Peace Delegation. In the period up to Wilson's arrival in Paris at the beginning of December 1918, the second phase of this struggle took place, ending, after a first serious setback, in the most favorable result for House. He apparent-

ly re-established his position with the President and at the same time ensured himself a solid position of personal power by building up his own organization within the Delegation.<sup>55</sup> However, this was also the beginning of the end. He became so absorbed in consolidating his own key position not only in the American Delegation, but also in respect of the Conference as a whole, that he failed to keep himself au courant with Wilson's policy. He never succeeded in regaining the awareness of the President's innermost thoughts that he had apparently lost during the pre-Armistice negotiations. In addition, he fell ill during the decisive political manoeuvres before the Peace Conference opened, and he thereby lost the influence that he had hoped to exercise.<sup>56</sup>

When Wilson left the Conference in the middle of February 1919 for a short visit to the United States, House threw himself into restless action to regain lost ground, but he seems to a certain extent to have lost touch with the realities of the situation. He saw himself in the role of grand manipulator of the Conference and forgot that his primary task was to act as mouthpiece for American policy. There can be no doubt at all that during this period, House acted in clear contradiction of Wilson's intentions, both as regards the League of Nations and as regards the French demands in respect of the Rhineland; he failed to counter the efforts that were once more being made to separate the League of Nations Covenant from the Peace Treaty, and he allowed himself to become very heavily involved in negotiations on a compromise on the French demands.<sup>57</sup>

The consequence of House's attitude here was a prior weakening of Wilson's bargaining position, a weakening that was further accentuated by the domestic developments in the United States, where Wilson was encountering heavy opposition to his League of Nations policy. Indeed, all indications point to the fact that the close personal relationship between House and Wilson came to an abrupt and definite end as soon as the President returned to France, the 'break' evidently taking place during the very first talk between the two men. Wilson here apparently learned enough about the events of the previous month to feel that House had failed him, while House, for his part, would have liked an opportunity to explain matters in detail. This opportunity was never granted to him; from now on, as clearly shown by a detailed analysis of American policy in the subsequent period, he was left out in the cold.<sup>58</sup> After the return of the President in mid-March 1919 House was

without any real influence upon American policy-making. He was, in fact, as much in the dark regarding Wilson's thoughts and intentions as his three fellow-Commissioners; although, thanks to his connections in the French and British Delegations and his contacts with the American Experts, he was better informed of the work of the Conference as a whole than were Lansing, White and Bliss.<sup>59</sup>

There is no reason to attribute the break itself to exterior intrigues, although there is no doubt that even before Wilson left Paris in February, House was in a rather isolated position in the Delegation. His energetic efforts to gather all power in his own hands seem to have had a marked effect on the working climate in The American Commission to Negotiate Peace, and House's fellow-Commissioners, in particular, felt both frustrated and bitter. The most influential group in the Delegation, apart from House, appears to have been the economic experts, several of whom (Bernard Baruch, Vance McCormick) were already personal friends of the President. However, it is not possible to prove that any intrigues on their part or on that of others contributed to the break itself. As long as House enjoyed Wilson's trust he was unassailable. On the other hand, it is naturally possible that after his talk with House in March, Wilson became more heedful of information that may have helped to deepen the cleft. All the same, this is pure hypothesis.<sup>60</sup>

However, it can be ascertained that for a short time during the height of the crisis of the Conference at the beginning of April, House was once more taken into favor. Again he failed; it was not his policy of concessions in the negotiations on reparations during Wilson's illness that proved decisive—here he was only continuing a policy already initiated by the President—but once more his pro-French policy, this time on the question of the Saar. In this serious crisis Wilson deliberately chose to stand firm on this question, he wanted—at least for a time—to demonstrate the strength of his principles, and this, House did not understand. A not insignificant part in the course of these events was also played by Gordon Auchincloss, House's son-in-law, and Wickham Steed of *The Times*. The explosion took place on 4 April.<sup>61</sup>

After this House's role was, in fact, played out. It is true that he was later involved in the negotiations on a compromise with Italy, but this was apparently mostly on his own initiative. House's conduct during the Italian negotiations finally exposed his total isolation in the Delegation, but it did not appear to affect his personal relationship with the President; that, as House was only too aware,

had already been broken.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, several members of the American Delegation, especially House's fellow-Commissioners Lansing, White and Bliss, were still under the illusion that House was a person of influence. They, therefore, made him responsible for the solution of the Shantung-question although it was actually Wilson himself who had decided on this against the wishes of nearly all other members of the American Delegation. House was almost the only one who understood — and approved — the decision, but his advice was not sought by the President.<sup>63</sup> Incidentally, during the last phase of the Conference House seems to have devoted himself increasingly to building up the League of Nations. Besides having a truly idealistic interest in the concept of the League he saw, in the possibility of a prominent post within this organization, a consolation for the position he had lost with the President. But here, too, he was disappointed.<sup>64</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 Inga Floto, *Colonel House in Paris: A Study of American Policy at the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Århus, Universitetsforlaget i Århus, 1973.
- 2 For some of the latest interpretations of American policy at the Peace Conference see Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918–1919*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968; and Klaus Schwabe, *Deutsche Revolution und Wilsonfrieden. Die amerikanische und deutsche Friedensstrategie zwischen Ideologie und Machtpolitik 1918–19*, Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1971.
- 3 New York, Doubleday, Page and Co. In a review in *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 12. rk., bd. IV, pp. 107–138, I have discussed the post-World War II debate on Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy.
- 4 *Through Thirty Years II*, London, William Heinemann, 1924.
- 5 I–IV. London, Ernest Benn, 1926–1928.
- 6 *Intimate Papers*, pp. 392–393. Italics are Seymour's.
- 7 Seymour's thesis was well received by Robert C. Binkley ('Ten years of Peace Conference History,' *The Journal of Modern History*, I, 1929, 607–629): 'Baker's theory is that House weakened Wilson unnecessarily; Seymour's theory is that Wilson ruined the peace with fruitless intransigence. This is an issue clearly joined, and well worthy of further study. It can be tested by examining the proceedings of commissions and the records of the political currents of the time. It is to be hoped that the attention of historians will follow such an issue as this, and not pursue further the fate of the melodramatic 'February Plot.' Ten years later, Paul Birdsall gave his answer ('The Second Decade of Peace Conference History,' *The Journal of Modern History*, XI, 1939, 362–378): 'But the conflict of principle and personality will not down. Indeed it becomes clearer and clearer that such conflicts were not only entirely real, but were a fundamental factor in shaping the treaties... [E]verything that has appeared in the category of memoirs and letters, as well as much purely historical writing, has tended to increase the stature of Wilson while substantiating more and more the early charges made by Ray Stannard

- Baker that Colonel House created serious difficulties for the President by his disposition to compromise on essential principles.'
- 8 New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941. Birdsall did not quite overlook the possibility that the break had started earlier. See specially pp. 329-330.
  - 9 Thomas A. Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*, New York, MacMillan Co., 1944, pp. 361-362. Seymour indeed put forward the thesis of the gradual cooling of the friendship, but at the same time he tried hard to minimize the problem. He accepted, 'that the relations of Wilson and House had undergone a certain change during the course of the Peace Conference,' but at the same time he not only refuted Baker's 'February plot,' but also stressed the fact that Wilson continued to use House during the last part of the Conference and sought his advice on several occasions, and that during the summer he signed all letters to House 'affectionately yours.' It was only after he fell ill—and after a long period of silence—that this affectionate greeting was exchanged for more cool expressions (in no more than three letters in all): 'Thus the friendship lapsed. It was not broken' (*Intimate Papers*, pp. 526-533).
  - 10 See, for instance, the article written by Cary Grayson in 1926, which was published posthumously: 'The Colonel's Folly and the President's Distress,' *American Heritage*, XV (Oct. 1964), 94-101; George Creel to R. S. Baker 27.3.1926, R.S. Baker papers, Series I, Library of Congress; Memorandum of Interviews with Dr. Cary T. Grayson on February 18, 19, 1926 at Washington, *ibid.*; Memorandum of a Conversation with Vance C. McCormick 15.7.1928, *ibid.*
  - 11 New York, John Day Co., 1956. With reference to further discussion of the book it is probably important to emphasize that neither is either a historian or a psychiatrist, the two sciences which they try to combine. —In Danish, on the other hand, the historian Povl Bagge has made the following experiment: He wrote a political biography of Johan Nicolay Madvig (Copenhagen, Ejnar Munksgaard, 1955) and showed the chapters in which he described Madvig's personality to a psychiatrist, Ib Ostenfeld. Ostenfeld then made his evaluation on the basis of this material, and this was published as an appendix to the biography.
- In 1967, just before he died, William C. Bullitt published a book written by himself and Sigmund Freud: *Thomas Woodrow Wilson. Twentieth President of the United States. A Psychological Study*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company. If the book had been published before the scholarly analysis by George and George it probably would have been both a sensation and a catastrophe; now it was only a catastrophe. Freud and Bullitt met each other in 1930 and for several reasons they started co-operating on a study of Woodrow Wilson. At this time Freud was 74 and Bullitt 39. Bullitt writes of the procedure (p. vii): 'From these private documents and conversations I compiled notes which ran to more than fifteen hundred typewritten pages. When I returned to Vienna, Freud read the notes and we discussed thoroughly the facts they contained. We then began to write. Freud wrote the first draft of portions of the manuscript and I wrote the first draft of other portions. Each then criticized, amended or rewrote the other's draft until the whole became an amalgam for which we were both responsible.' In 1932, when the book was ready for publishing, Freud wished certain changes to be made to which Bullitt would not agree. Not until 1939, just before he died, did Freud give his assent to publication. This was further postponed until the death of Mrs. Wilson, and even after that Freud's relatives tried to stop publication, *inter alia* because they found the manuscript 'perplexingly unlike any other that Freud had written. . . . That is, Freud's psychoanalytic

- guidelines had been badly formulated and misapplied.' This view was also put forward by the reviewer in *The New York Times Book Review*: 'From general interpretations supplied by Freud, Bullitt seems to have managed a distorted weapon of revenge.' (Robert Sussman Stewart, 'Posthumous Analysis,' *The New York Times Book Review*, 21.1.1967, pp. 3 and 42-44. From this review I have also taken the information about Freud's relatives.)
- 12 The dedication is taken from Seymour's *American Diplomacy During the World War*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1934.
  - 13 See, for instance Bernard Baruch to Carter Glass 17.3.1926, Baruch to Glass 22.9.1926, Glass to Baruch 16.10.1926. Baruch Papers, Princeton University Library.
  - 14 Peace Moves and U-boat Warfare, *Stockholm Studies in History*, II, Stockholm, 1958, 223-225, 365-366.
  - 15 A. O. Sarkissian ed., *Studies in History and Historiography*, p. 90.
  - 16 Edward H. Buehrig ed., *Wilson's Foreign Policy in Perspective*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1957, pp. 11-33.
  - 17 *Ibid.* pp. 15-16.
  - 18 *Ibid.* p. 33.
  - 19 *Ibid.* p. 26.
  - 20 Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919*, London, Constable and Co., 1943, p. 33, University Paperback, Methuen, 1964, p. 15.
  - 21 Wilson: Confusions and Crises 1915-1916, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964, pp. 101-141. The so-called House-Grey memorandum was a memorandum prepared on February 17, 1916 by Sir Edward Grey after a conversation with Edward House. During this conversation House told Grey 'that President Wilson was ready, on hearing from France and England that the moment was opportune, to propose that a Conference should be summoned to put an end to the war. Should the Allies accept this proposal, and should Germany refuse it, the United States would probably enter the War against Germany.' It was further stated that the possible peace terms would be 'not unfavourable to the Allies.' When House returned to the United States, President Wilson confirmed the memorandum. While the American revisionist writers during the 'thirties in this found ample proof of Wilson's and House's willingness to lead America into war on the side of the Allies, post-World War II historians have viewed the British motives with scepticism, and wondered how it was possible for House to take these negotiations seriously at all.
  - 22 *Ibid.* p. 141. It has been of great importance to Link's evaluation that he was allowed to use 'an important French diplomatic archive' (presumably Ambassador Jusserand's). In this way he got a chance to see the French memoranda of the important conversations between House and Jules Cambon, former French Ambassador to Germany, February 2, 1916, and between House and the French Prime Minister, Aristide Briand, and Jules Cambon February 7, 1916. He was thus able to make an evaluation of House independent of his diary and telegrams to Wilson. Ernest R. May has tried a similar comparison in another connection: *The World War and American Isolation 1914-1917*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1959, pp. 79-80. In January 1915, just before leaving on his first peace mission to Europe, House had a conversation with the Allied Ambassadors in Washington. May compared the report of the Russian Ambassador (Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya v Epokhu Imperializma, Series III, VII, no. 8, Moscow, 1930) to House's diary entry (*Int. Pap.*, I, 352) and concluded: 'The difference between these two documents does not suggest that House's diary is an inaccurate record, but it does indicate that the Colonel is not always to be trusted

- as an *interpreter* of others' moods and thoughts. In any case, the Colonel had made his effort and thought he had succeeded' (Italics mine). However, being 'an interpreter of others' moods and thoughts' was exactly the task House was supposed to fulfil.
- 23 Link, pp. 89-93. House also grasped the political situation in England at once, even though he did not take the consequences: Grey's position was now seriously shaken, Lloyd George was the strong man (*Int. Pap.*, II, 133 and 141).
- 24 Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1955, pp. 186-187.
- 25 P. 352.
- 26 Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, pp. 81-85 and *passim*.
- 27 *Op.cit.*, pp. 84-85.
- 28 *Int. Pap.*, pp. 3-4. Italics mine.
- 29 *Op.cit.* p. 82. Cf. also Burton F. Beers, *Vain Endeavor*. Robert Lansing's *Attempts to End the American-Japanese Rivalry*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1962, pp. 187-188: 'All materials, especially the Diary, must be used with caution. House seems to have had the historian constantly in mind as he produced his record.'
- 30 House diary 28.6.1918; 24.9.1918; 12.11.1918; 20.12.1918; 2.4.1919. Seymour tells us that the diary was begun on September 9, 1912, a time when House was beginning to be seriously involved in important political events (*Int. Pap.* I, p. 75).
- 31 In the following I have purposely refrained from any evaluation of this aspect of the book, not being a psychologist myself. To a historian, at any rate, the analysis seems rather heavy-handed.
- 32 George and George, p. 340. Cf. p. 323.
- 33 The authors base their description of House's pre-Wilson period rather uncritically on his two autobiographical essays. House always preferred a 'behind the scenes' function, and the authors ascribed this to his notoriously bad health. But was he not also afraid of the burdens of responsibility? A very positive evaluation of House's Texas years and indeed of House in general is given by Rupert Richardson Colonel Edward M. House. *The Texas Years 1858-1912*, Abilene, Texas, Hardin Simmons University, 1964.
- 34 Wilson's first wife, Ellen Axson Wilson, had accepted her husband's special relationship with House with great understanding. She died in August 1914, and left Wilson in a state of deep depression. 'In his grief, Wilson needed his friends more than ever. His emotional dependence upon House, to judge from House's diary and the letters which the President wrote him, seems to have reached its peak in the period between the death of Ellen Axson Wilson and Wilson's marriage to Edith Bolling Galt in December 1915' (George and George, p. 155). The new Mrs. Wilson did not show the same tolerance, she thought House a 'yes, yes man,' and in the long run she did not keep her antipathy to herself. 'She seems, however, not to have comprehended that House's 'yes, yes' characteristics were implicitly demanded by Wilson as the price of maintaining his status as presidential adviser' (*Ibid.* p. 187). See also George Sylvester Viereck, *The Strangest Friendship in History: Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House*, New York, Liveright, 1932. Viereck's book is a curious combination of insight and hearsay.
- 35 George and George, p. 187. Seymour analyzed the Wilson-House correspondence and found that the way Wilson titulates House and the formulas for greetings he used indicate a considerable change following the reelection. Seymour therefore concluded that the personal relationship between the two men was most intimate before 1917, while on the other hand, the American



- participation in war brought a vast increase in House's responsibilities (*Int. Pap.*, I—IV, *passim*).
- 36 'House confided to his diary ...' (George and George, p. 127); '... the privacy of his diary...' (p. 128); '... House confided to his diary ...' (p. 183); '... the *safety* of his diary ...' (p. 185); '... the intimacy of his diary ...' (p. 190). *Italics mine*.
  - 37 *Ibid.*, p. 158. For further discussion of this element, see my review in *Historisk Tidsskrift*.
  - 38 Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations*, Chicago, 1953.
  - 39 George and George, p. 163.
  - 40 *Ibid.*, p. 336.
  - 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.
  - 42 New York, Harper and Row, 1954, p. 203; George and George, p. 336.
  - 43 George and George, p. 168.
  - 44 *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.
  - 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.
  - 46 *Ibid.*, p. 242.
  - 47 *Ibid.*, p. 246.
  - 48 Floto, *Col. House*, chapters 1 and 2.
  - 49 See above p. 32 and George and George p. 187.
  - 50 See Floto, *Col. House*, p. 35 and *passim*.
  - 51 *Ibid.*, chapters 1 and 2, especially pp. 71-72.
  - 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
  - 53 *Ibid.*, chapter 3 and 4.
  - 54 *Ibid.*, p. 60 and chapter 2.
  - 55 *Ibid.*, chapter 2.
  - 56 *Ibid.*, chapter 2 and pp. 99-104.
  - 57 *Ibid.*, chapter 3.
  - 58 *Ibid.*, chapter 4.
  - 59 *Ibid.*, chapter 4 and 5.
  - 60 *Ibid.*, chapter 4 and 5.
  - 61 *Ibid.*, pp. 188-207.
  - 62 *Ibid.*, pp. 215-232, especially p. 224.
  - 63 Pp., 232-234.
  - 64 Pp., 234-239.